

Workplace Emergency Preparedness

Prepared by
Montgomery County's Office
of Emergency Management
and Homeland Security



“WE pursue the common good by working for and with Montgomery County’s diverse community members to provide A Responsive and Accountable County Government, Affordable Housing in an Inclusive Community, An Effective and Efficient Transportation Network, Children Prepared to Live and Learn, Healthy and Sustainable Communities, Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods, A Strong and Vibrant Economy, [and] Vital Living for All of Our Residents.”

-- *Montgomery County Mission Statement*



**A special thanks to the following
organizations for their contributions to
the development of the Montgomery
County Employee Emergency Handbook
and training program**

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Montgomery County Office of Human Resources
Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service
Montgomery County Department of General Services
Montgomery County Department of Police

Introduction

- Welcome to the Montgomery County Employee Emergency Preparedness Training, which has been developed as a result of a direct concern by the County for the life and safety of its employees. This training is designed to prepare Montgomery County employees for various types of emergencies with which they might be faced. This preparation will help ensure your safety, as well as that of your colleagues. Completion of this training represents your support of the County's commitment to safety.
- **This training has been split into three modules**
 - **Module 1: Employee Policies and Notification**
 - **Module 2: Emergency Response Procedures**
 - **Module 3: Sheltering-in-Place and Special Needs**

Objectives

- Upon completion of this training you will learn about:
 - **Module 1: Employee Policies and Notification**
 - Understand the need for emergency preparedness training, where to receive information regarding an emergency and employee leave policies.
 - **Module 2: Emergency Response Procedures**
 - Understand the different responses required by different emergencies such as a fire, bomb threat, earthquakes and winter storm.
 - **Module 3: Sheltering-in-Place and Special Needs**
 - Be able to define Sheltering-in-Place
 - Understand how to assist those with special needs during an emergency

Module 1

General Preparedness Points

- **IF AN EMERGENCY STRIKES WHILE YOU ARE AT A WORKSITE**, you are to take whatever actions necessary to protect yourself. Check in with your supervisor or other designated person at your worksite. If you are injured or otherwise unable to contact your family, every effort will be made to contact your family using the Emergency Contact information you have provided the Department.
- **IF AN EMERGENCY STRIKES WHILE YOU ARE NOT AT YOUR USUAL PLACE OF WORK** (e.g., you are doing field work, working in another office or at meeting in another building), call your supervisor or someone else at your work site (if you cannot reach your supervisor) as soon as possible.

Notification

- To receive timely and accurate information regarding any emergency:
 - Listen to radio stations for emergency broadcasts and instructions
 - **WMAL 0630 AM**
 - **WTOP 1500 AM & 103.5 FM**
 - **WWRC 1260**
 - **WKYS 93.9**
 - Prior to an emergency, sign up for:
 - **Alert Montgomery** to receive important emergency alerts, notifications and updates to all of your devices, including your phone, e-mail, text pager, wireless PDA, and XM Radio Channel 214. This alert system is available to all Montgomery County residents. You can sign up for Alert Montgomery at <https://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov/index.php?CCheck=1>.
 - The **Montgomery County Emergency Network (MCEN)** to receive important emergency and priority information through e-mail, phone and text message. This system differs from that of Alert Montgomery in that it is only available to Montgomery County Employees and enables groups and departments to send specific information to its members. You can sign up for MCEN at <https://mcen.montgomerycountymd.gov/index.php?CCheck=1>.

Employee Leave Policies

- In the event of an emergency, employees should listen to local radio and television news stations to determine the status of the County offices. In some cases, only those individuals designated as essential employees will be required to report to work. The type of leave announced will dictate whether or not you must report to work.
- **MODIFIED LIBERAL LEAVE (MCPR 2001 SECTION 15-6)**
 - During a modified liberal leave period, minimum staffing must be maintained; however, department directors will try to permit as many employees as possible to be on leave. An employee who wants to use leave must request and obtain approval. All essential personnel should still report.
- **LIBERAL LEAVE (MCPR 2001 SECTION 15-6)**
 - An announcement of Liberal Leave permits employees to use leave when reporting late, leaving work early or electing to remain at home. Notification, which can be done through voice mail, must be made to the supervisor of the use of Liberal Leave. All essential personnel should still report.
- **GENERAL EMERGENCY (MCPR 2001 SECTION 15-6)**
 - Announcement of a General Emergency requires all employees previously designated as essential to report to work as scheduled. Non-essential employees are placed on administrative leave for the period of their work schedule covered by the Emergency.
 - Definition: General Emergency – “A period declared by the County Executive or CAO during which government offices are closed and public services are temporarily limited or not available because of severe weather or other extraordinary conditions.” (MCPR 2001 Section 1-28)

Essential vs. Non-Essential Employees

Essential Employees

- Essential employees are those employees required to report to work during a modified liberal leave, liberal leave period, and general emergency unless they are prevented from doing so by severe weather or other emergency.
- Department directors will ensure that employees who are designated as essential are informed of this; however, directors may designate a non-essential employee as essential during a particular emergency if needed to perform critical work.

Module 2

Emergency Response Procedures

The following slides describe emergency procedures for certain potential emergency situations. These procedures are intended as a general guideline and are in no way intended to contradict first responder instructions. Additionally, although the following list of emergencies represents the most common types that may be faced, possible emergencies are not limited to those listed. Please make yourself familiar with these procedures so that when an actual emergency arises, you are ready to take action. As stated earlier, the first priority in an emergency should always be to maintain life and safety.



Inclement Weather

■ IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS:

- Employees will be notified of the opening or closing of offices through public service announcements on local radio and television stations as well as the MCEN alert system
- If inclement weather conditions arise during the course of normal business hours, and a General Emergency or Liberal Leave period is designated, employees will be notified through department channels or county communication.

WATCH VS. WARNING

It is important to understand the differences between watches and warnings.

A Watch usually indicates a hazardous weather event is “possible”.

A Warning usually indicates the event is likely or imminent.

PLEASE NOTE: Only the County Executive, Chief Administrative Officer, or their designee may close a particular worksite.



Earthquake

- In the event of an earthquake:
 - **REMAIN CALM. DROP** to the ground and take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture and **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building. Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
 - Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, load bearing doorway.
 - Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside.
 - If outside, stay there and move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
 - Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
 - **DO NOT** use the elevators.
 - **DO NOT** attempt to go outside until the shaking has stopped.
 - **DO NOT** attempt to turn light switches on and off.
 - **DO NOT** light a match.



Earthquake (continued)

In the aftermath of an earthquake be aware of aftershocks, they are usually not as strong but can cause more damage to weakened structures and may continue for days, months or even years after the initial quake.

Evacuate the Building Immediately in the event of the following:

If you smell or suspect a gas leak. Go to a location where you no longer smell the gas. Report the leak by calling 911.

If there is electrical damage. Report the hazard by calling 911.

Or if you are directed by your supervisor or the building's Chief Warden.

PLEASE NOTE: 911 should ONLY be used for life-threatening emergencies and NOT for information purposes.

Electrical Power Outage

- **REMAIN CALM.** Most of the time, building power will be restored automatically within seconds. If it is safe to do so, turn off equipment.
- Account for all people in your immediate area or span of responsibility.
- Report the electrical outage to Operations and Maintenance with the following information: (Phones in the immediate outage area may not function.)
 - Where are you (building name, which floor, what room)?
 - Where is the outage?
 - What known hazards exist to first responders?
- Await further instructions from supervisor.
- Once power is restored, check all equipment for proper function and reset if necessary.



Bomb Threats

Unfortunately, Bomb Threats are sometimes received by government facilities. Understanding what to do when one is received will help to ensure everyone's safety as well as the police and Fire's ability to respond. However, different procedures are required depending on how a bomb threat is received.

■ IF A BOMB THREAT IS RECEIVED BY TELEPHONE:

- Get a co-worker, if possible, to listen with you.
- Remain calm and courteous. Keep the caller on the line as long as possible.
- Attempt to record every word spoken by the caller, paying extra attention to background noises, the caller's tone of voice, and the caller's speech pattern. Ask caller the following questions and write down their responses:
 - WHO are you and who placed the bomb?
 - WHAT kind of bomb is it and what does it look like? What will cause it to explode?
 - WHEN will the bomb explode?
 - WHERE is the bomb?
- Ask the caller to repeat their message.
- Immediately call 911 and your manager or supervisor.
- Your Supervisor will determine if evacuation is necessary.



Bomb Threats (continued)

■ IF THE BOMB THREAT IS WRITTEN

- Remain calm.
- Immediately call 911 and your manager or supervisor.
- If there is a package, once discovered, do not touch, move, or open it. Preserve scene for Police.
- Keep others from handling or going near package.
- Your supervisor will determine if evacuation is necessary.



IMPORTANT NOTE:

DO NOT PULL FIRE ALARM WHEN A BOMB THREAT, EITHER VIA TELEPHONE OR WRITTEN IS RECEIVED. This will disable the elevators, which are needed for evacuation purposes.

Suspicious Mail and Packages

- **WHEN IDENTIFYING SUSPICIOUS MAIL, LOOK FOR:**
 - Poorly typed or hand-written address, no return address
 - Stains, discolorations, or strange odor
 - Excessive tape, string, or postage
- **IF YOU RECEIVE SUSPICIOUS MAIL:**
 - **REMAIN CALM.**
 - Put letter or package down and **DO NOT DISTURB** the package further.
 - Block off the immediate work area, but **DO NOT LEAVE** your workplace.
 - Call your supervisor and 911.
 - If possible, wash your hands. Do not touch nose, eyes or mouth before washing.
 - **WAIT FOR HELP; DO NOT LEAVE YOUR AREA.**



Suspicious Mail and Packages

(continued)

■ WHAT TO DO WITH UNKNOWN POWDER SUBSTANCES IN MAIL:

- Immediately upon discovery of an unknown powder substance, contact the Evacuation/Floor Warden or a supervisor.
- **DO NOT PULL THE FIRE ALARM** because pulling the fire alarm could shut down the elevators.
- The Warden or supervisor will call 911, the Building Manager or Security Desk and the Wardens on the other floors, as well as shut down the heating and air conditioning systems.
- The individual who has discovered the powder and those in the immediate area will be instructed to go into an isolated office, while the others on the floor remain in place until the HAZMAT Team has released them. Then the Warden will determine whether to follow either option 1 or 2.

Option 1: Evacuate if Powder is Aerosolized	Option 2: Do Not Evacuate if Only a Little Powder is Spilled.
THIS SHOULD NOT BE DONE BY ACTIVATING THE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM , unless people are showing signs of exposure	Close off the area if possible. No one is to enter or leave the floor. There is no need to evacuate the building.

Hazardous Materials Incident

IF YOU SMELL A SUSPICIOUS ODOR

Outside of the building: Stay **inside** and **shelter-in-place** until an assessment of the situation is conducted. It is likely to be safer to remain inside than to evacuate because of the potentially toxic environment outside.

Inside of the building: If the odor is strong, offensive, irritating or causing acute illness, call security and evacuate the area immediately as per the facility evacuation plan.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO A DANGEROUS SUBSTANCE

- **Call 911.**
- Notify staff supervisor and ensure that no one else comes into contact with the chemical.
- Remove contaminated clothing and call poison control at the **Maryland Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222** for immediate advice.



IF YOU WITNESS A HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SPILL OR ATTACK:

- Leave the immediate area as quickly as possible and protect yourself by finding something to place over your nose and mouth.
- If you have open cuts/wounds, covering exposed skin may help prevent bacteria from entering cuts you may have.
- **Call 911** to report the attack.

Fire/Smoke

IF YOU DETECT SMOKE OR FIRE:

- Immediately pull the nearest fire alarm.
- Evacuate to a safe place.
- Call 911 to report the location of the fire. Be specific with the location of the building. 911 may not automatically see your address.

IF YOU HEAR A FIRE ALARM:

- Immediately evacuate the area using marked emergency exits.
- Do not use elevators
- Do not waste time by gathering your belongings.
- Individuals requiring evacuation assistance should go to the designated area for rescue assistance on their floor and await further instructions.

■ DURING EVACUATION

- Remain Calm. Walk, do not run.
- Close doors as you leave, and exit out the nearest door.
- Go to the designated Primary Assembly Area assigned in your evacuation plan, and report to the floor warden for your area.

******If all exits from a floor are blocked, return to your work area and:******

1. Call 911 to tell them you cannot leave and specifically where you are.
2. Close the door and place a towel or article of clothing along the bottom edge of the door.
3. Open the windows for fresh air and hang an article of clothing or other similar article out the window. This will let the fire department know you are still in the building.

Medical Emergency

■ IF THERE IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY:

- Call 911 if you believe the injury or illness is life threatening and provide the dispatcher with:
 - The specific location of the patient and their age (if known);
 - The nature of the injured person's illness or injury; and
 - Your name and phone number
- Remain on the line to answer any questions.
- Immediately ask a nearby co-worker to direct rescue units to your location.
- **DO NOT** attempt to move an injured person unless you have been trained.



Flood Emergency

■ IF THERE IS A FLOOD EMERGENCY:

- **DO NOT ENTER A FLOOD AREA** as hazards beyond slipping on a wet floor exist. There is clear danger of electrical shock, being hit by falling debris and encountering hazardous materials.
- Remove people from the immediate flood area to safety. If it is safe to do so, protect equipment and documents from water damage.
- Report the flood to Operations and Maintenance or call 911 if flood waters are rising or have blocked entry or exit to the facility.

Report with the following information:

Where are you (building name, which floor, what room)?

Where is the flood?

What do you see (water coming from above, the color of the water, whether the water is hot or cold, and the source of the water if it is visible)?

What known hazards exist to first responders?

- Follow any instructions provided to you by Operations and Maintenance or Emergency Personnel. Advise first responders of known hazards and critical equipment that needs to be protected if possible.

Workplace Violence

■ WHEN CONFRONTED WITH WORKPLACE VIOLENCE:

- **DO NOT** confront the perpetrator.
- If you observe an individual with a firearm, and you are able to do so, you should leave the area immediately.
- Immediately call 911 and Security in your building, and notify of the incident location, description of assailant, any injuries, type of weapon (if appropriate), and number of hostages (if appropriate).

If possible give a description of the assailant:

Approximate Height and Weight, Hair color,
Gender, Facial features, Clothes description,
Identifying marks and Race

- Injured individuals should be kept calm and given first aid assistance as soon as possible.
- Follow directions for evacuation of the area or building. **DO NOT** re-enter an area until given clearance



How to Shelter-In-Place

- In certain emergency situations, it may be safer to **shelter-in-place** within the building instead of evacuating. Shelter-in-place means selecting a small, interior room, with few or no windows, and taking refuge there.
- **HOW TO SHELTER-IN-PLACE AT WORK:**
 - Close the office, bring everyone into the room(s), and shut and lock door(s) and windows.
 - Select interior room(s) above the ground floor, with the fewest windows or vents. Avoid overcrowding by selecting several rooms, if necessary.
 - Avoid selecting a room with mechanical equipment like ventilation blowers or pipes, because this equipment may not be able to be sealed from the outdoors.
 - Write down the names of everyone in the room and note their affiliation with your office (i.e. employee, visitor, client, customer, etc.); call your office supervisor with this information.
 - Keep listening to the radio or television, if available, until you are told that all is safe or that you should evacuate.
 - **DO NOT** use elevators. The movement of elevators pumps significant amounts of air in and out of a building

Helping Individuals with Disabilities

■ Non-Ambulatory Personnel:

- If no smoke or fire is on that floor, non-ambulatory employees should be assisted just outside a stairwell landing also known as a rescue assistance area. Call 911 to alert them to your location and the reason you cannot evacuate and remain in this location for evacuation or further instructions by fire department personnel. It is important that the co-worker or “buddy” who is assigned to the person with the disability stay with the person until the emergency is over.

■ Semi-Ambulatory:

- A co-worker or “buddy” should be designated to be of assistance and/or accompany the person in descending the stair in the event additional help is needed, or the individual may choose to wait in a stairwell for fire department personnel to assist them. In these instances, it is important to inform the fire department personnel of this decision so call 911 to alert them to your location and the reason you cannot evacuate, remain in this location. Once again, it is important for the co-worker or “buddy” to stay with this person until the emergency is over.

■ Visual Impairment:

- An employee with a visual impairment should notify their supervisor if they feel they would need assistance in the event of an evacuation, and they should be assigned a “buddy.” Once again, it is important for the co-worker or “buddy” to stay with the person until the emergency is over.

■ Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

- Employees who are deaf or hard of hearing may be able to see a visual alarm, depending on its placement. If so, they should be able to evacuate with other employees. If there is no visual alarm nearby, personal notification in the form of sign or hand gestures will be necessary. It is especially important to check in restrooms, copy rooms, and kitchens in case an alarm may not be seen from that area.

Always ask the person with a disability if they need assistance and the best way to assist.